DANIEL WARREN JOHNSON JORGE CORONA MIKE SPICER

TRANSFORMERS

image

#11

ENERGON UNIVERSE

TRANSFORMERS

ISSUE ELEVEN

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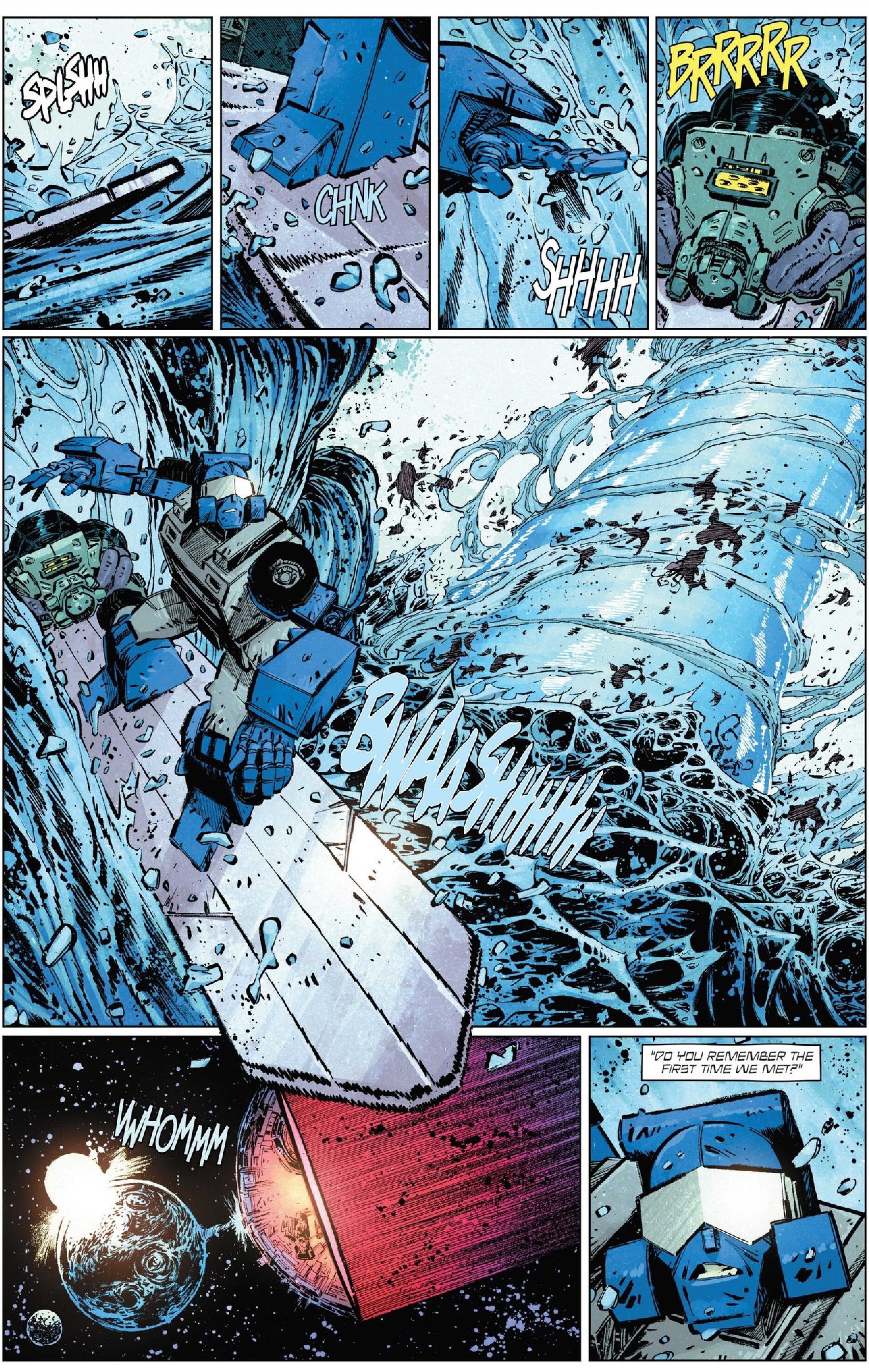
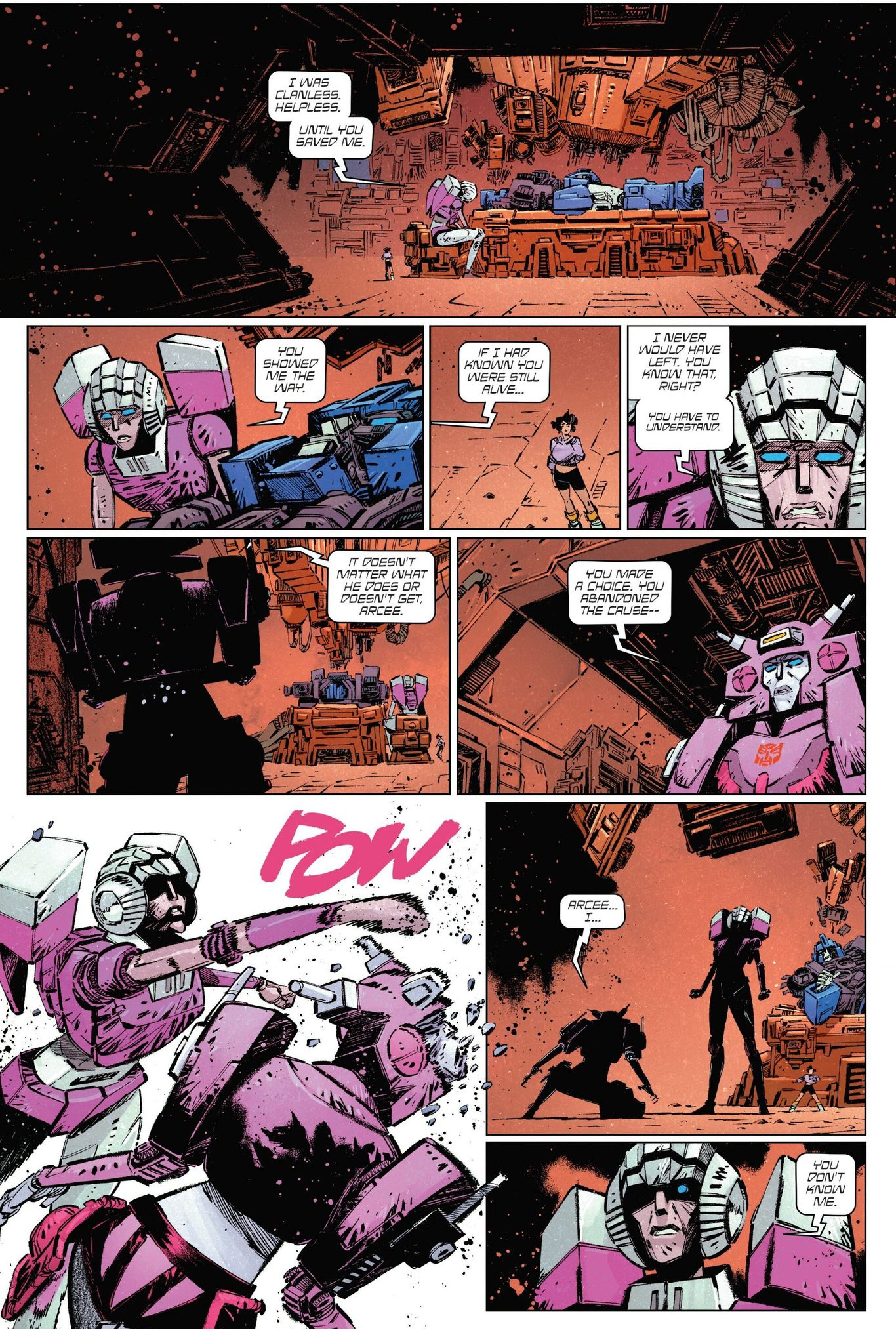
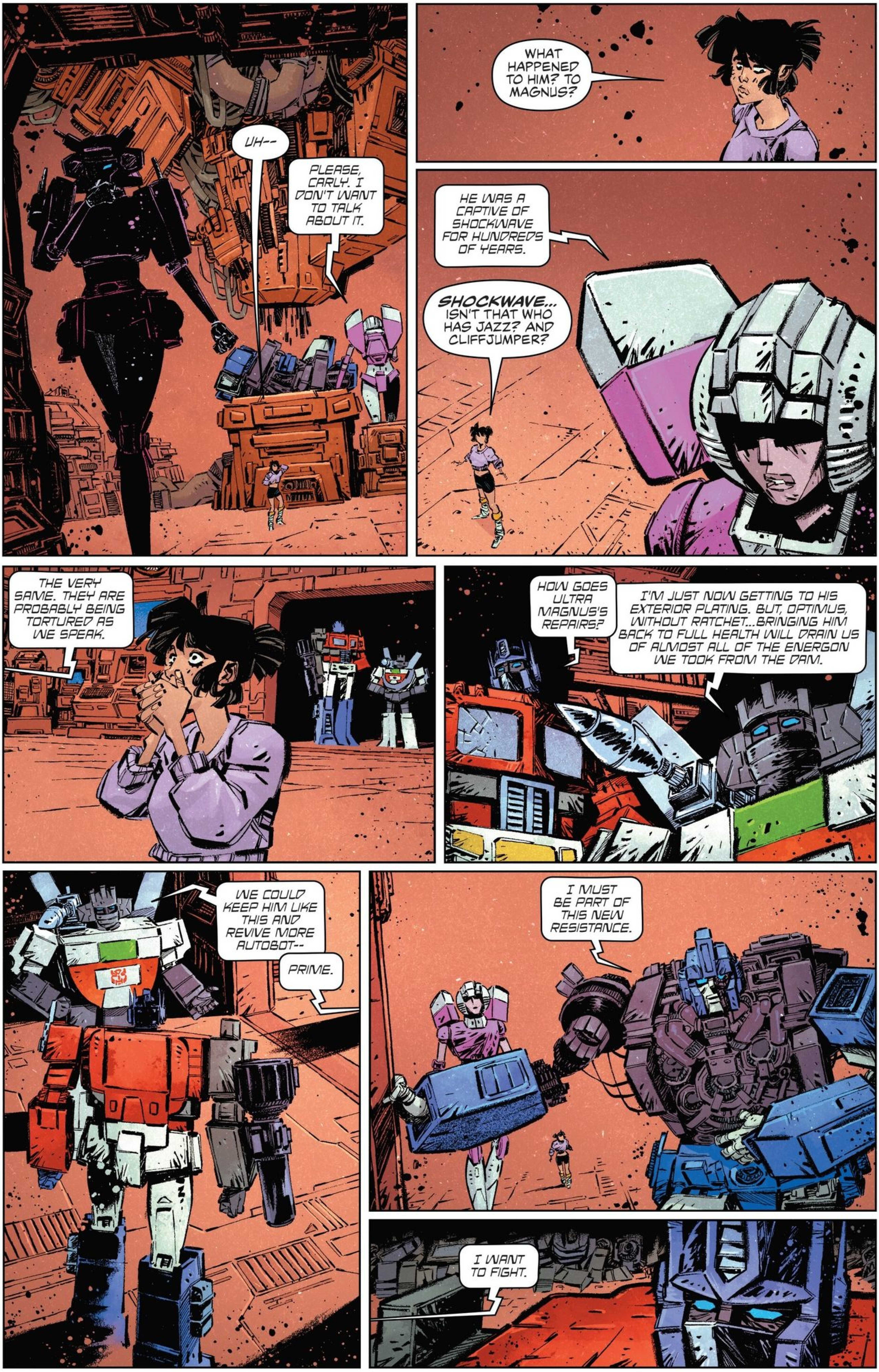
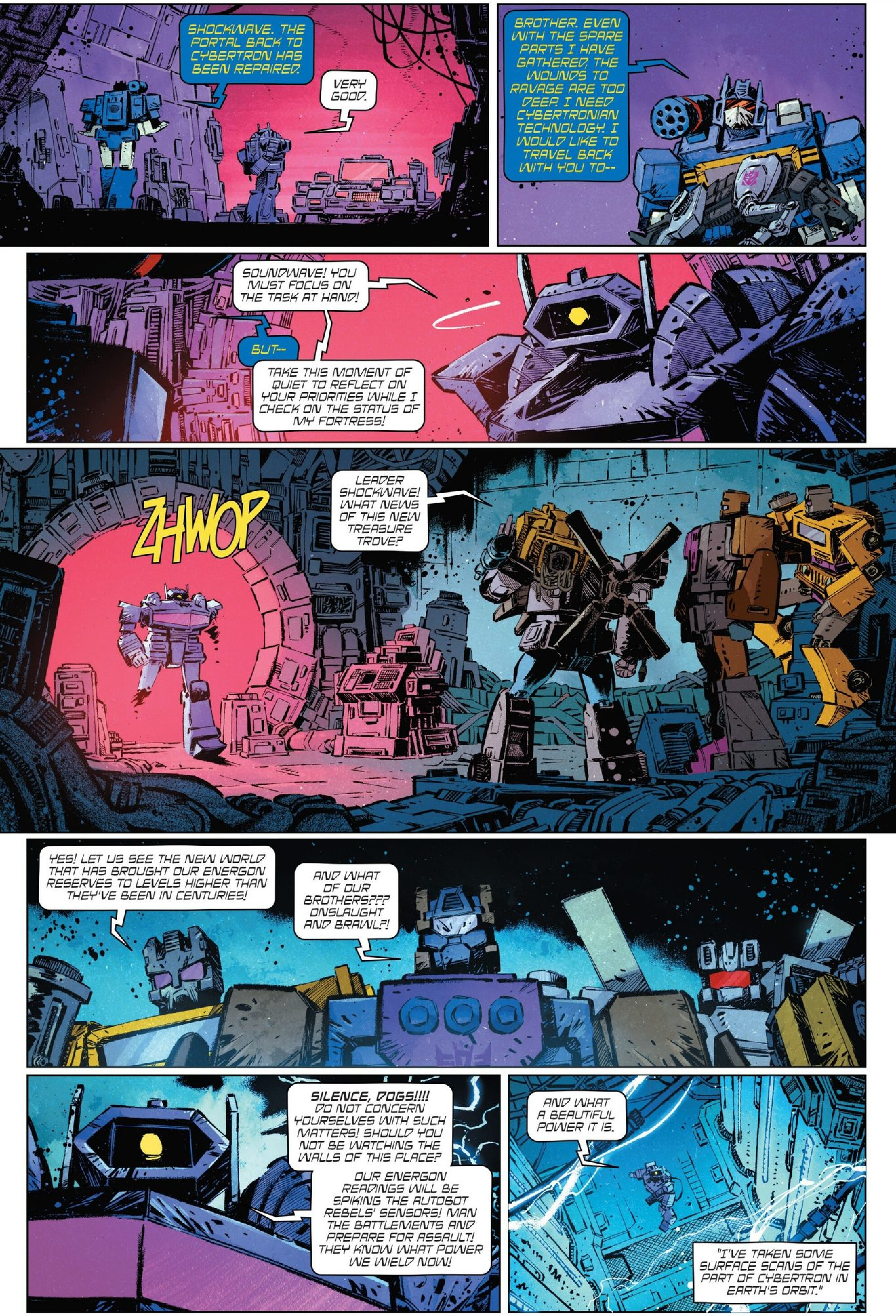
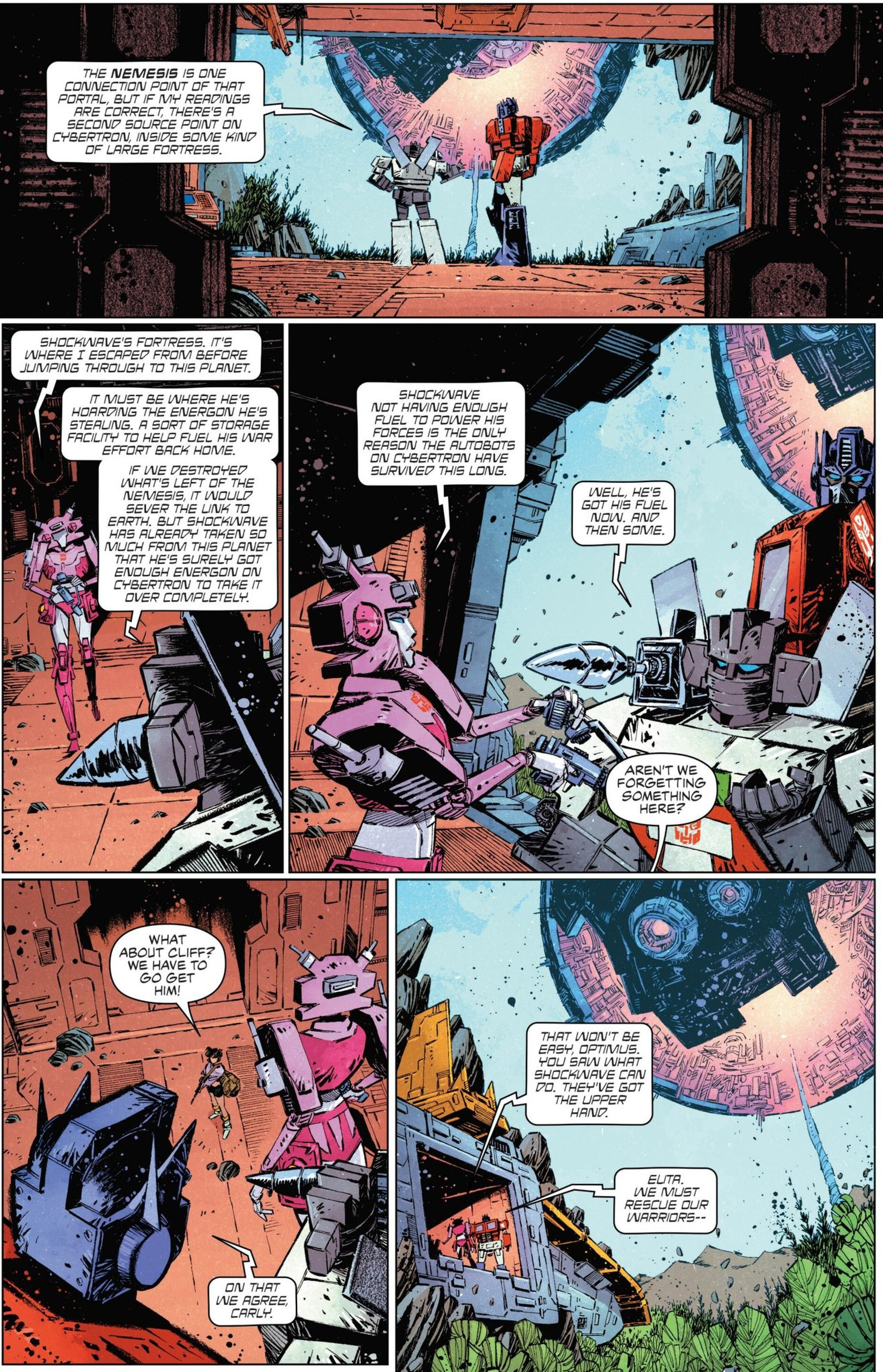
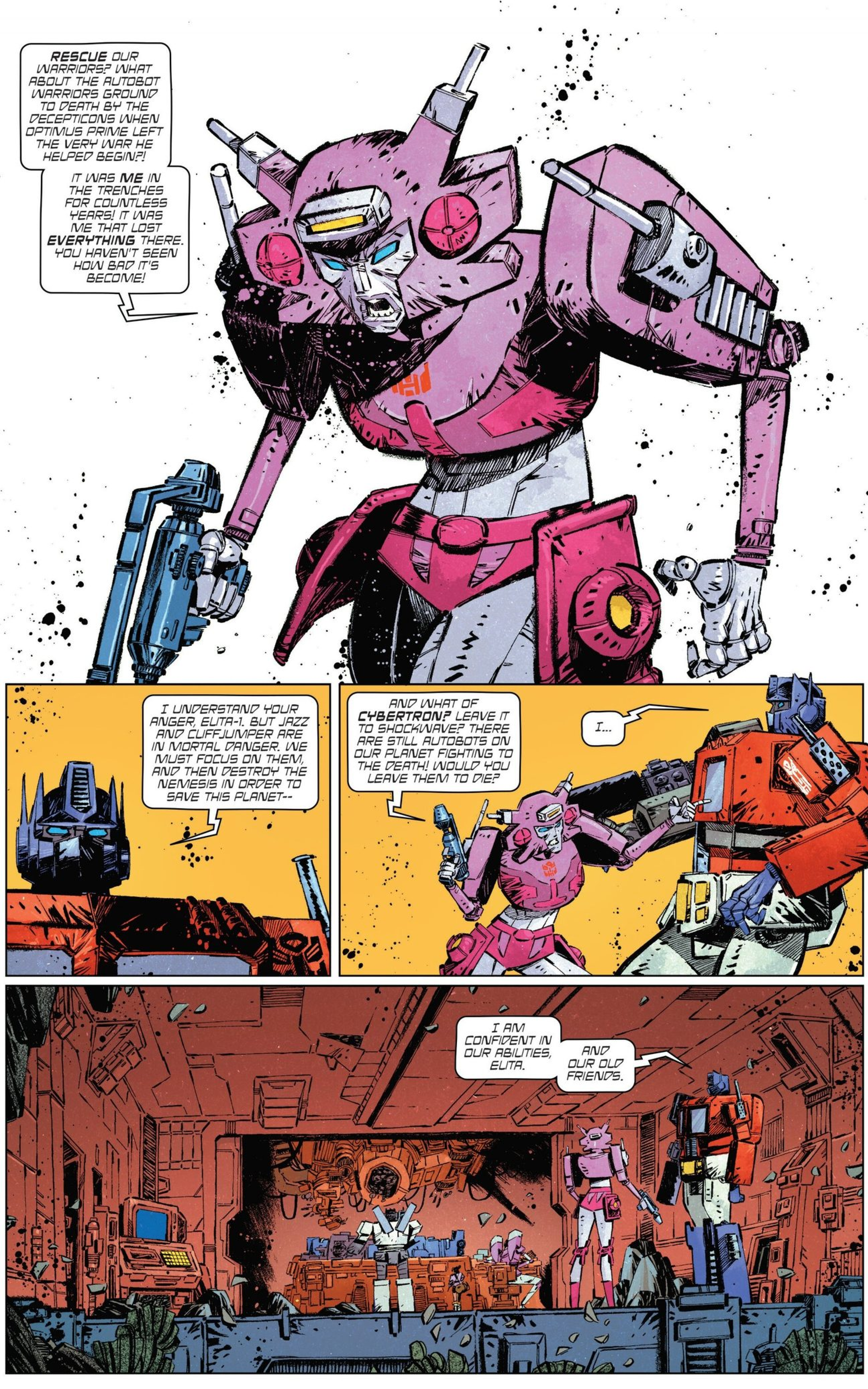

SPLSHH
CHNK
SHHHH
BRRRRR
BWAA-SHHHHH
VWHOMMM
"DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME WE MET?"

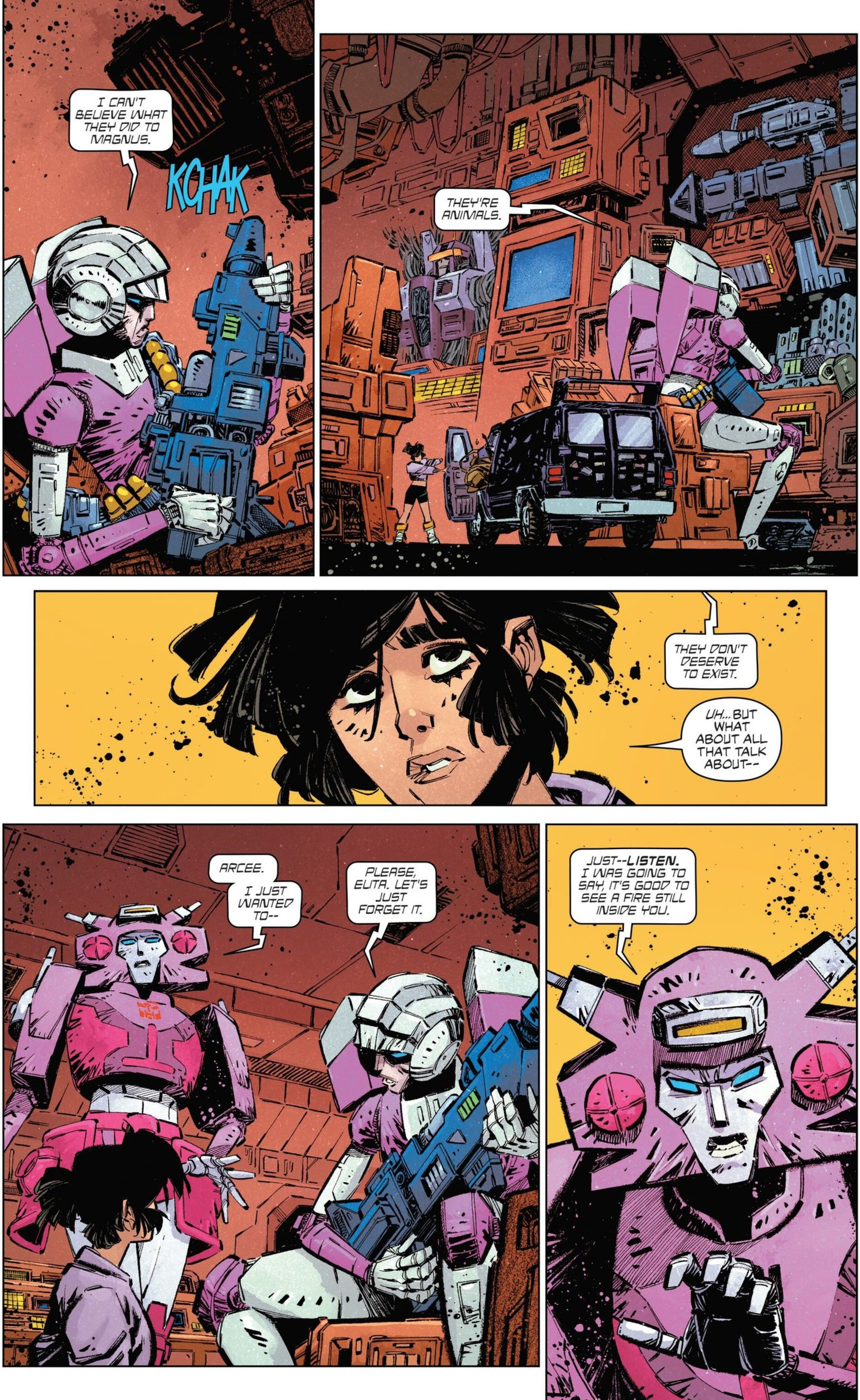

I WAS CLANLESS. HELPLESS.
UNTIL YOU SAVED ME.
YOU SHOWED ME THE WAY.
IF I HAD KNOWN YOU WERE STILL ALIVE...
I NEVER WOULD HAVE LEFT. YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HE DOES OR DOESN'T GET, ARCEE.
YOU MADE A CHOICE. YOU ABANDONED THE CAUSE--
POW
ARCEE... I...
YOU DON'T KNOW ME.

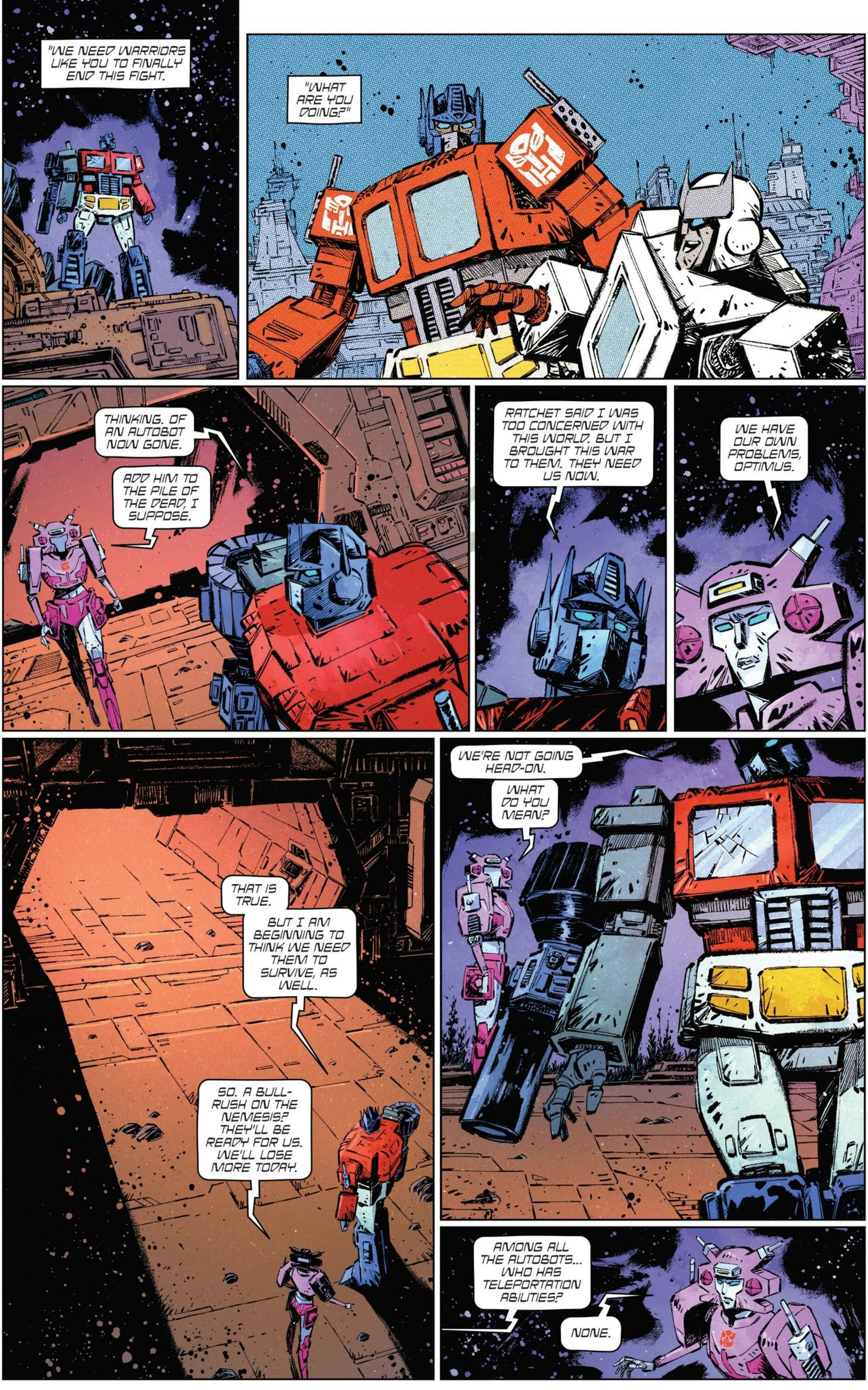

UH--
PLEASE, CARLY. I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM? TO MAGNUS?
HE WAS A CAPTIVE OF SHOCKWAVE FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS.
SHOCKWAVE... ISN'T THAT WHO HAS JAZZ? AND CLIFFJUMPER?
THE VERY SAME. THEY ARE PROBABLY BEING TORTURED AS WE SPEAK.
HOW GOES ULTRA MAGNUS'S REPAIRS?
I'M JUST NOW GETTING TO HIS EXTERIOR PLATING. BUT, OPTIMUS, WITHOUT RATCHET...BRINGING HIM BACK TO FULL HEALTH WILL DRAIN US OF ALMOST ALL OF THE ENERGON WE TOOK FROM THE DAM.
WE COULD KEEP HIM LIKE THIS AND REVIVE MORE AUTOBOT--
PRIME.
I MUST BE PART OF THIS NEW RESISTANCE.
I WANT TO FIGHT.

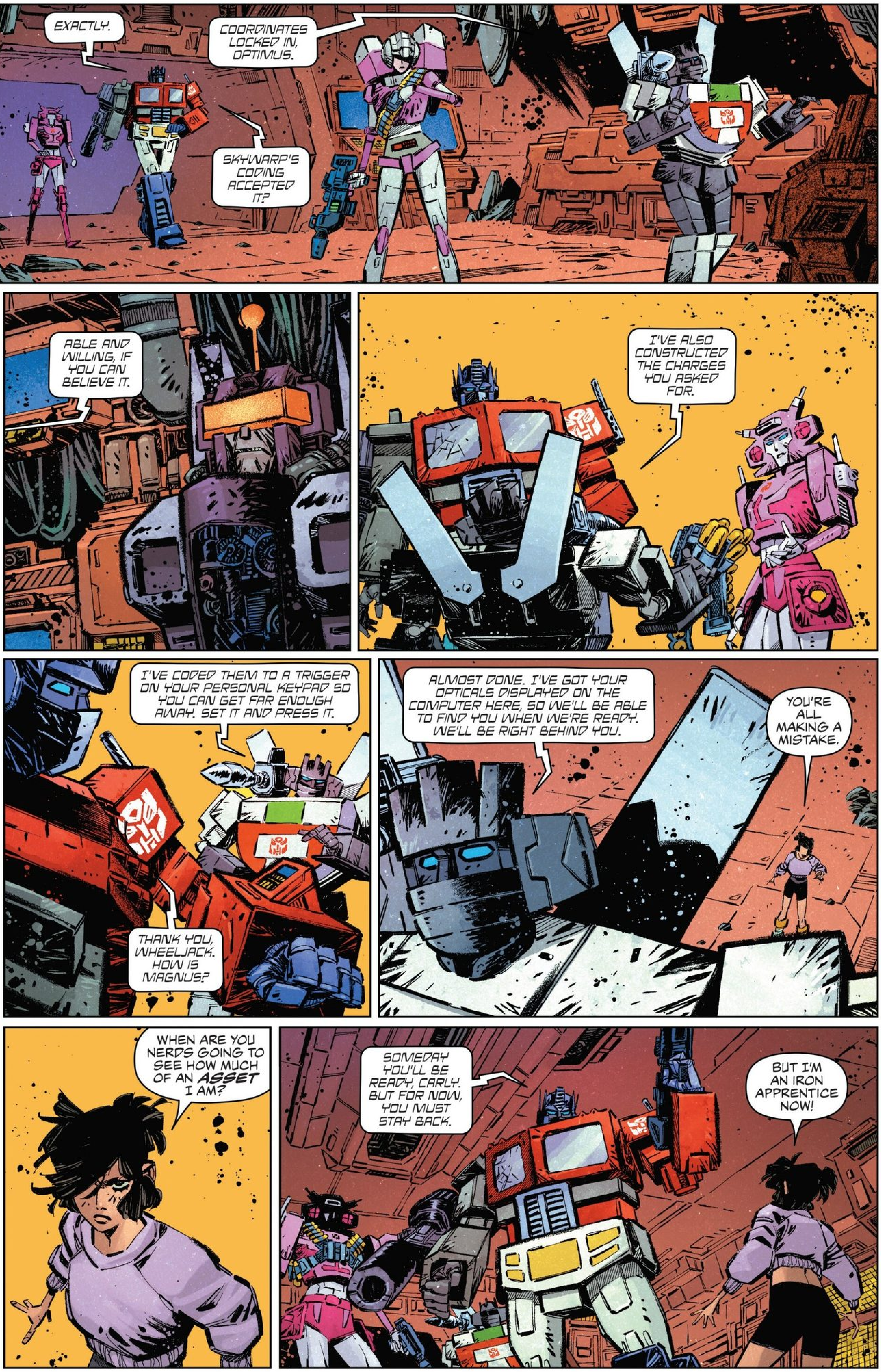

SHOCKWAVE. THE PORTAL BACK TO CYBERTRON HAS BEEN REPAIRED.
VERY GOOD.
BROTHER. EVEN WITH THE SPARE PARTS I HAVE GATHERED, THE WOUNDS TO RAVAGE ARE TOO DEEP. I NEED CYBERTRONIAN TECHNOLOGY. I WOULD LIKE TO TRAVEL BACK WITH YOU TO--
SOUNDWAVE! YOU MUST FOCUS ON THE TASK AT HAND!
BUT--
TAKE THIS MOMENT OF QUIET TO REFLECT ON YOUR PRIORITIES WHILE I CHECK ON THE STATUS OF MY FORTRESS!
ZHWOP
LEADER SHOCKWAVE! WHAT NEWS OF THIS NEW TREASURE TROVE?
YES! LET US SEE THE NEW WORLD THAT HAS BROUGHT OUR ENERGON RESERVES TO LEVELS HIGHER THAN THEY'VE BEEN IN CENTURIES!
AND WHAT OF OUR BROTHERS??? ONSLAUGHT AND BRAWL?!
SILENCE, DOGS!!!! DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELVES WITH SUCH MATTERS! SHOULD YOU NOT BE WATCHING THE WALLS OF THIS PLACE?
OUR ENERGON READINGS WILL BE SPIKING THE AUTOBOT REBELS' SENSORS! MAN THE BATTLEMENTS AND PREPARE FOR ASSAULT! THEY KNOW WHAT POWER WE WIELD NOW!
AND WHAT A BEAUTIFUL POWER IT IS.
"I'VE TAKEN SOME SURFACE SCANS OF THE PART OF CYBERTRON IN EARTH'S ORBIT."

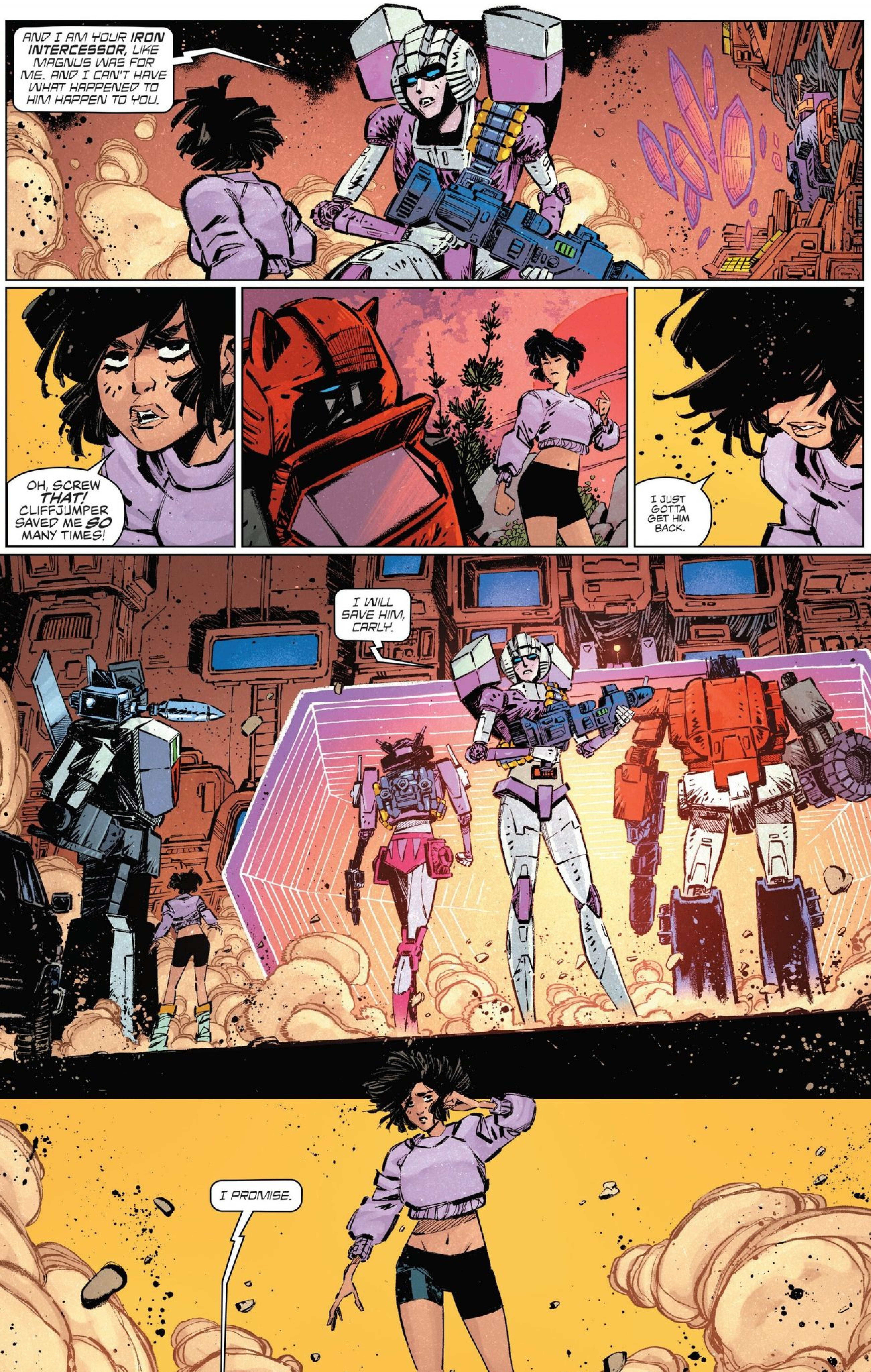

THE **NEMESIS** IS ONE CONNECTION POINT OF THAT PORTAL, BUT IF MY READINGS ARE CORRECT, THERE'S A SECOND SOURCE POINT ON CYBERTRON, INSIDE SOME KIND OF LARGE FORTRESS.
SHOCKWAVE'S FORTRESS. IT'S WHERE I ESCAPED FROM BEFORE JUMPING THROUGH TO THIS PLANET.
IT MUST BE WHERE HE'S HOARDING THE ENERGON HE'S STEALING. A SORT OF STORAGE FACILITY TO HELP FUEL HIS WAR EFFORT BACK HOME.
IF WE DESTROYED WHAT'S LEFT OF THE NEMESIS, IT WOULD SEVER THE LINK TO EARTH. BUT SHOCKWAVE HAS ALREADY TAKEN SO MUCH FROM THIS PLANET THAT HE'S SURELY GOT ENOUGH ENERGON ON CYBERTRON TO TAKE IT OVER COMPLETELY.
SHOCKWAVE NOT HAVING ENOUGH FUEL TO POWER HIS FORCES IS THE ONLY REASON THE AUTOBOTS ON CYBERTRON HAVE SURVIVED THIS LONG.
WELL, HE'S GOT HIS FUEL NOW. AND THEN SOME.
AREN'T WE FORGETTING SOMETHING HERE?
WHAT ABOUT CLIFF? WE HAVE TO GO GET HIM!
ON THAT WE AGREE, CARLY.
THAT WON'T BE EASY, OPTIMUS. YOU SAW WHAT SHOCKWAVE CAN DO. THEY'VE GOT THE UPPER HAND.
ELITA. WE MUST RESCUE OUR WARRIORS--

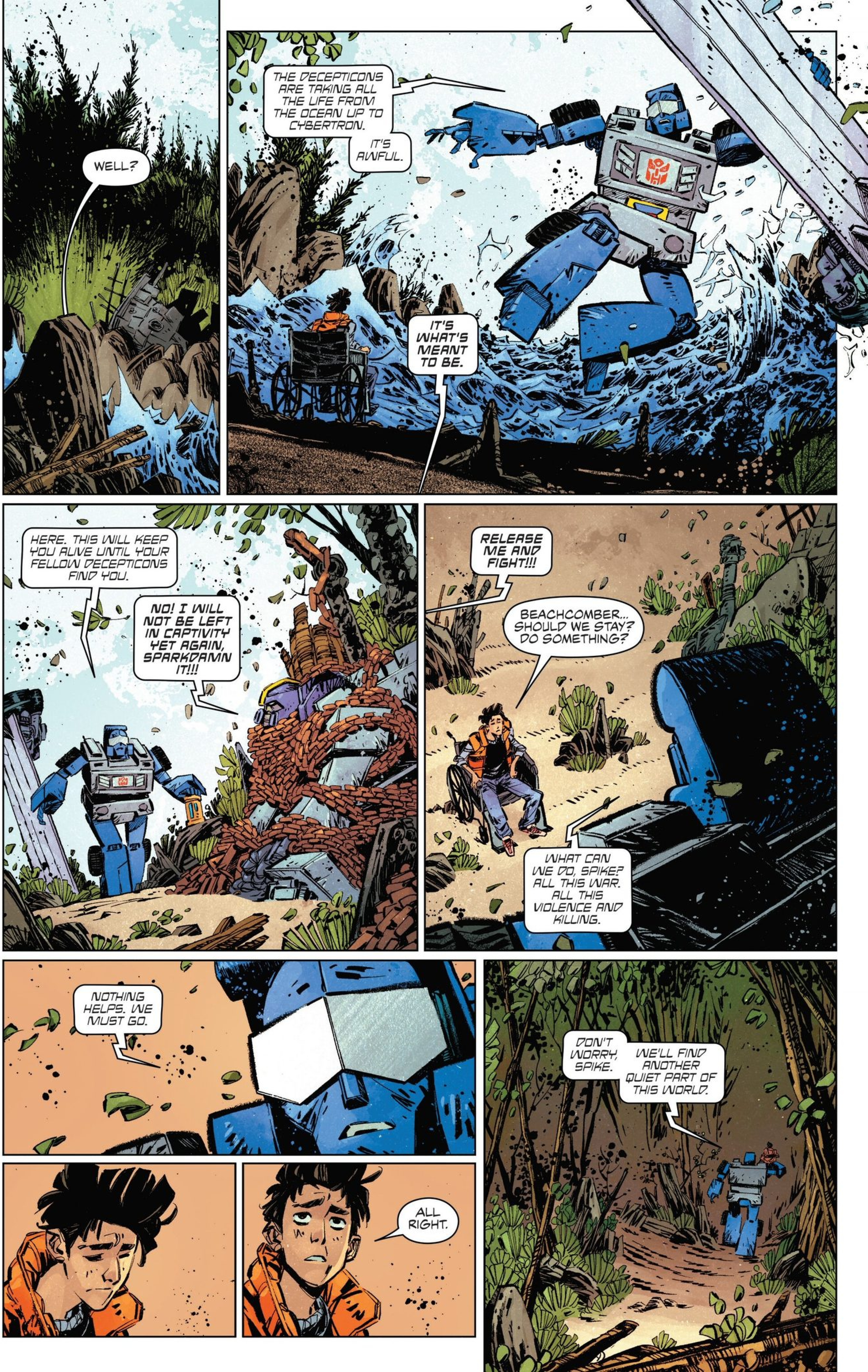

RESCUE OUR WARRIORS? WHAT ABOUT THE AUTOBOT WARRIORS GROUND TO DEATH BY THE DECEPTICONS WHEN OPTIMUS PRIME LEFT THE VERY WAR HE HELPED BEGIN?!
IT WAS ME IN THE TRENCHES FOR COUNTLESS YEARS! IT WAS ME THAT LOST EVERYTHING THERE. YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HOW BAD IT'S BECOME!
I UNDERSTAND YOUR ANGER, ELITA-1. BUT JAZZ AND CLIFFJUMPER ARE IN MORTAL DANGER. WE MUST FOCUS ON THEM, AND THEN DESTROY THE NEMESIS IN ORDER TO SAVE THIS PLANET--
AND WHAT OF CYBERTRON? LEAVE IT TO SHOCKWAVE? THERE ARE STILL AUTOBOTS ON OUR PLANET FIGHTING TO THE DEATH! WOULD YOU LEAVE THEM TO DIE?
I...
I AM CONFIDENT IN OUR ABILITIES, ELITA.
AND OUR OLD FRIENDS.

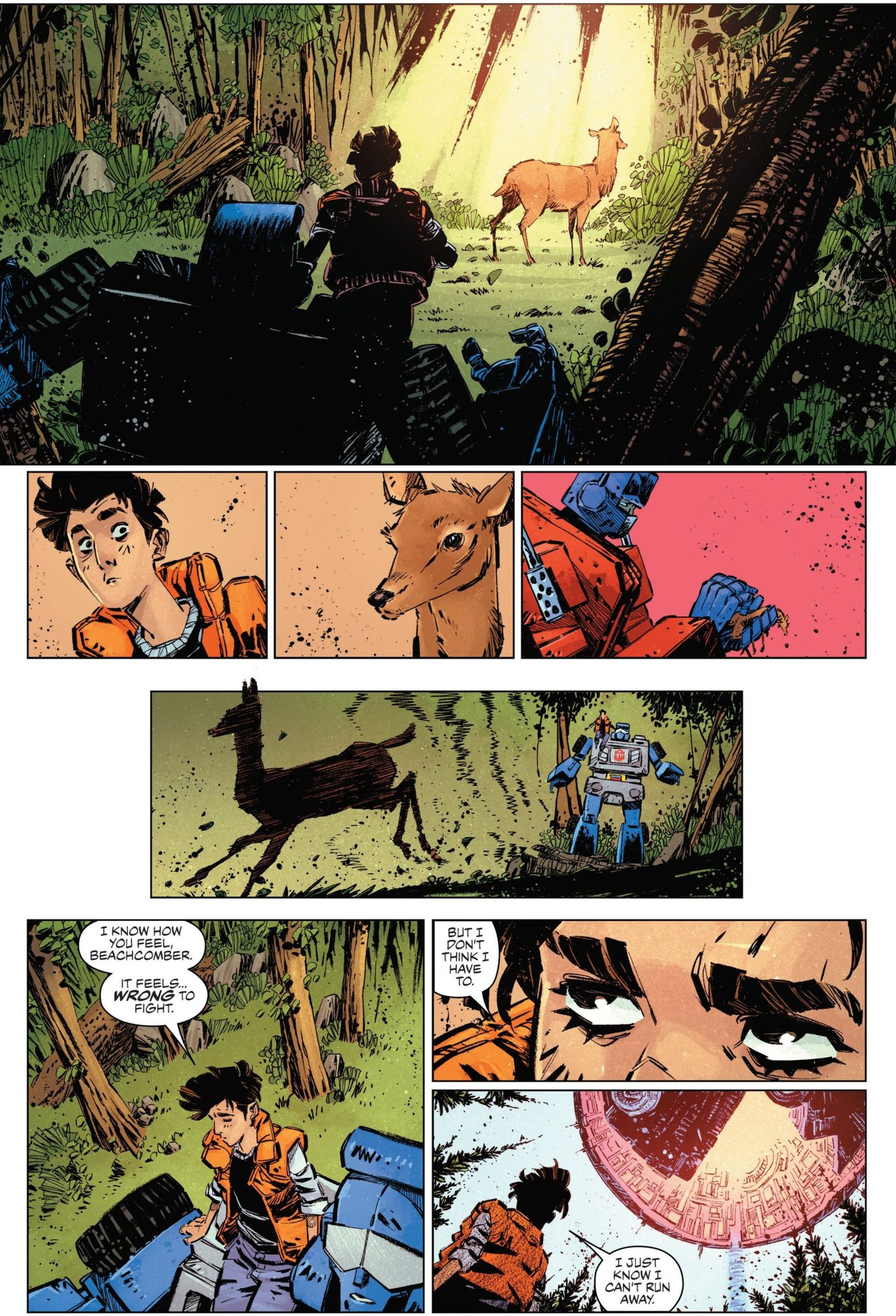

I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT THEY DID TO MAGNUS.
KCHAK
THEY'RE ANIMALS.
THEY DON'T DESERVE TO EXIST.
UH... BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THAT TALK ABOUT--
ARCEE. I JUST WANTED TO--
PLEASE, ELITA. LET'S JUST FORGET IT.
JUST--LISTEN. I WAS GOING TO SAY, IT'S GOOD TO SEE A FIRE STILL INSIDE YOU.

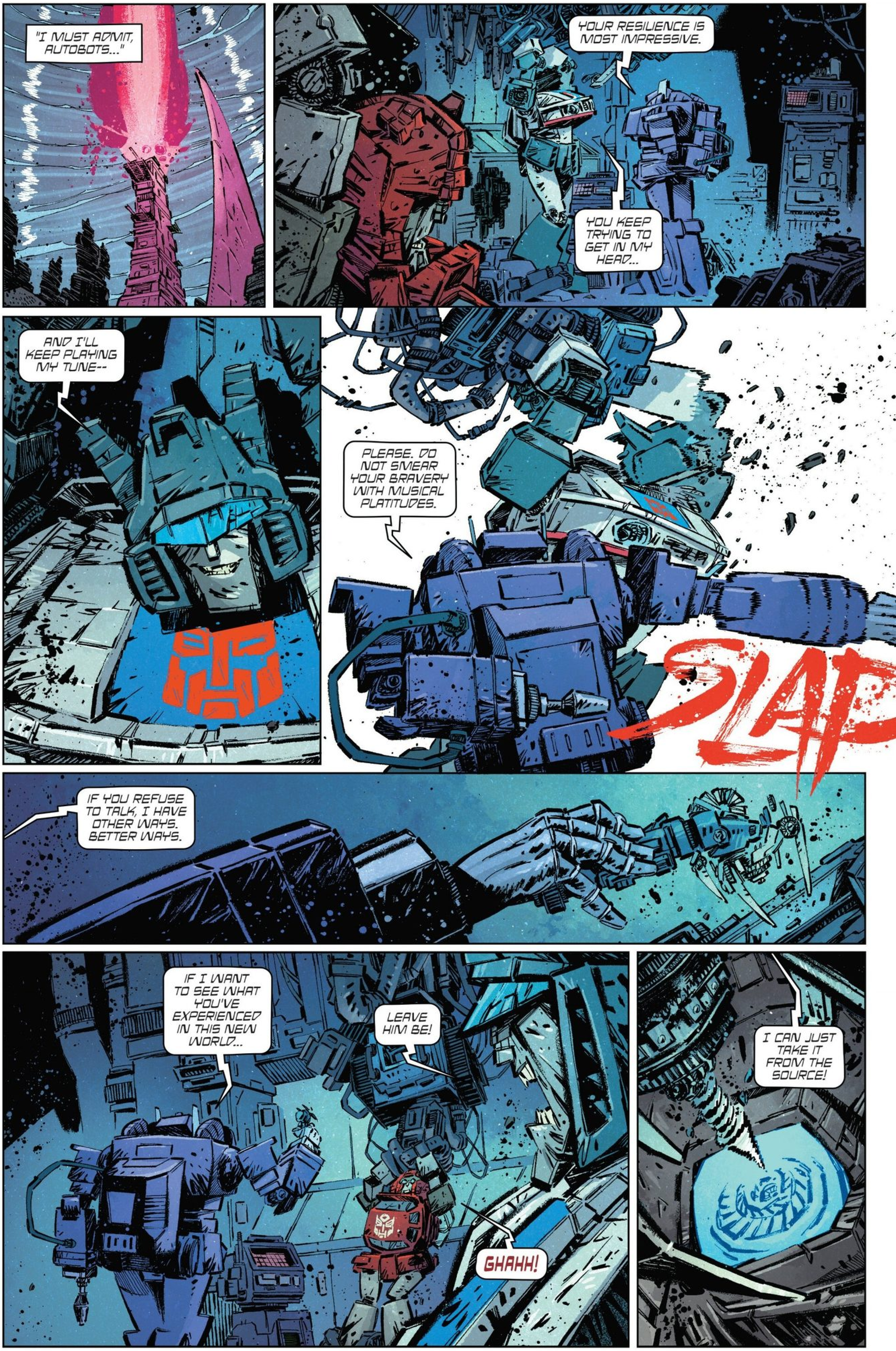

"WE NEED WARRIORS LIKE YOU TO FINALLY END THIS FIGHT.
"WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"
THINKING. OF AN AUTOBOT NOW GONE.
ADD HIM TO THE PILE OF THE DEAD, I SUPPOSE.
RATCHET SAID I WAS TOO CONCERNED WITH THIS WORLD. BUT I BROUGHT THIS WAR TO THEM. THEY NEED US NOW.
WE HAVE OUR OWN PROBLEMS, OPTIMUS.
THAT IS TRUE.
BUT I AM BEGINNING TO THINK WE NEED THEM TO SURVIVE, AS WELL.
SO. A BULL-RUSH ON THE NEMESIS? THEY'LL BE READY FOR US. WE'LL LOSE MORE TODAY.
WE'RE NOT GOING HEAD-ON.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
AMONG ALL THE AUTOBOTS... WHO HAS TELEPORTATION ABILITIES?
NONE.

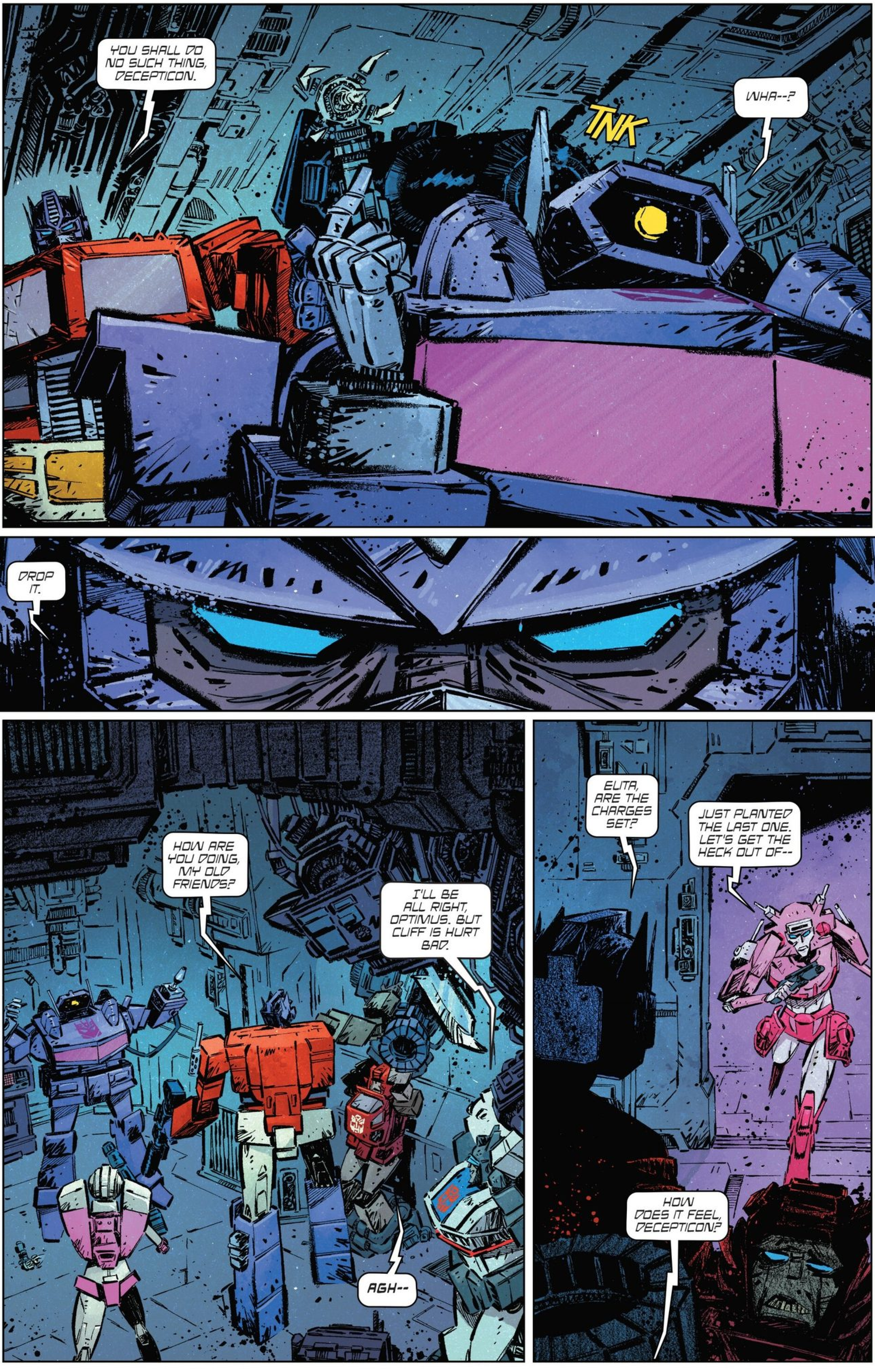

EXACTLY.
COORDINATES LOCKED IN, OPTIMUS.
SKYWARP'S CODING ACCEPTED IT?
ABLE AND WILLING, IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT.
I'VE ALSO CONSTRUCTED THE CHARGES YOU ASKED FOR.
I'VE CODED THEM TO A TRIGGER ON YOUR PERSONAL KEYPAD SO YOU CAN GET FAR ENOUGH AWAY. SET IT AND PRESS IT.
THANK YOU, WHEELJACK. HOW IS MAGNUS?
ALMOST DONE. I'VE GOT YOUR OPTICALS DISPLAYED ON THE COMPUTER HERE, SO WE'LL BE ABLE TO FIND YOU WHEN WE'RE READY. WE'LL BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
YOU'RE ALL MAKING A MISTAKE.
WHEN ARE YOU NERDS GOING TO SEE HOW MUCH OF AN ASSET I AM?
SOMEDAY YOU'LL BE READY, CARLY. BUT FOR NOW, YOU MUST STAY BACK.
BUT I'M AN IRON APPRENTICE NOW!

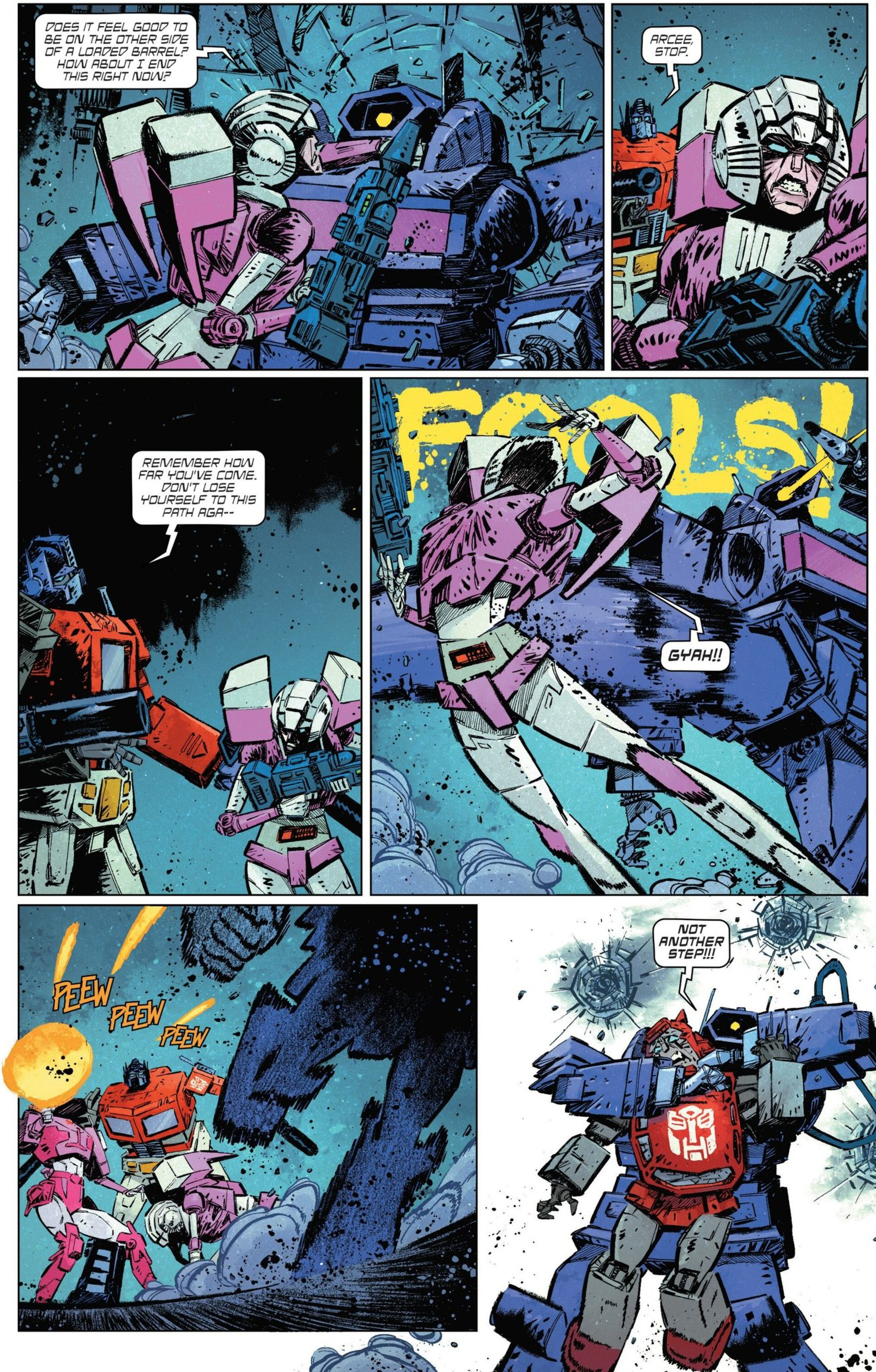

AND I AM YOUR **IRON INTERCESSOR,** LIKE MAGNUS WAS FOR ME. AND I CAN'T HAVE WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM HAPPEN TO YOU.
OH, SCREW ***THAT!*** CLIFFJUMPER SAVED ME ***SO*** MANY TIMES!
I JUST GOTTA GET HIM BACK.
I WILL SAVE HIM, CARLY.
I PROMISE.

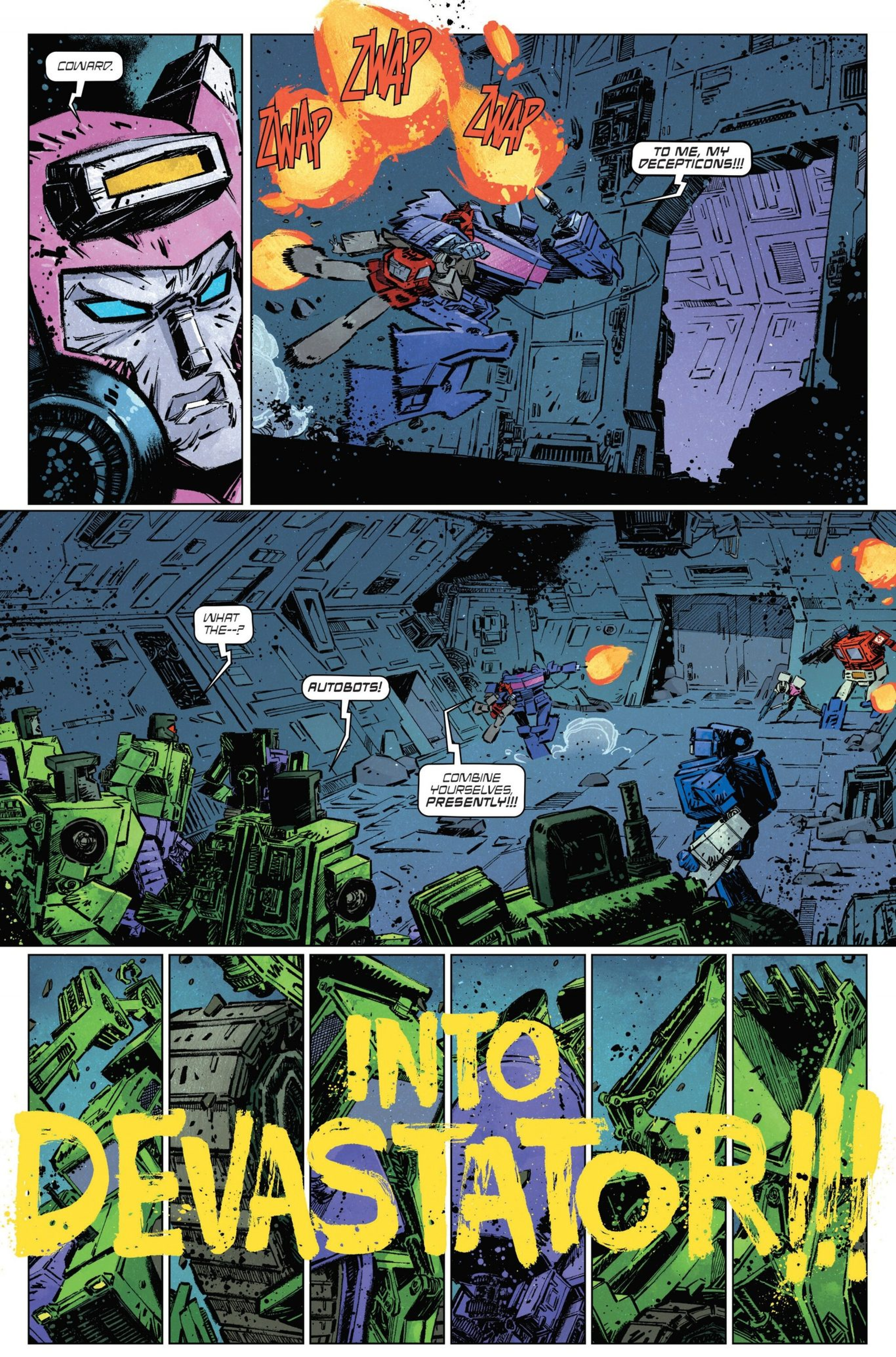

WELL?
THE DECEPTICONS ARE TAKING ALL THE LIFE FROM THE OCEAN UP TO CYBERTRON.
IT'S AWFUL.
IT'S WHAT'S MEANT TO BE.
HERE. THIS WILL KEEP YOU ALIVE UNTIL YOUR FELLOW DECEPTICONS FIND YOU.
NO! I WILL NOT BE LEFT IN CAPTIVITY YET AGAIN, SPARKDAMN IT!!!
RELEASE ME AND FIGHT!!!
BEACHCOMBER... SHOULD WE STAY? DO SOMETHING?
WHAT CAN WE DO, SPIKE? ALL THIS WAR. ALL THIS VIOLENCE AND KILLING.
NOTHING HELPS. WE MUST GO.
ALL RIGHT.
DON'T WORRY, SPIKE.
WE'LL FIND ANOTHER QUIET PART OF THIS WORLD.

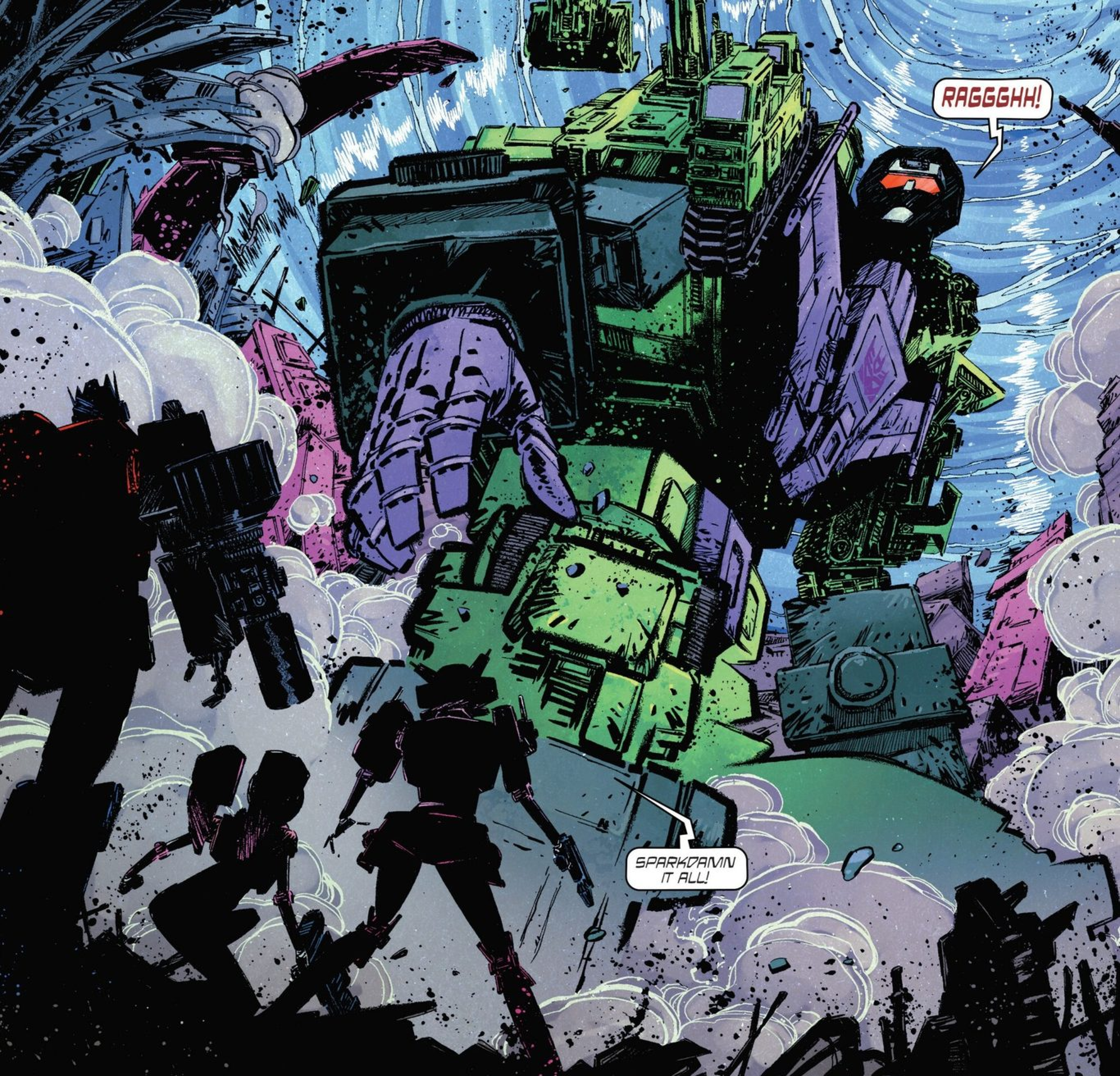

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BEACHCOMBER.
IT FEELS... WRONG TO FIGHT.
BUT I DON'T THINK I HAVE TO.
I JUST KNOW I CAN'T RUN AWAY.

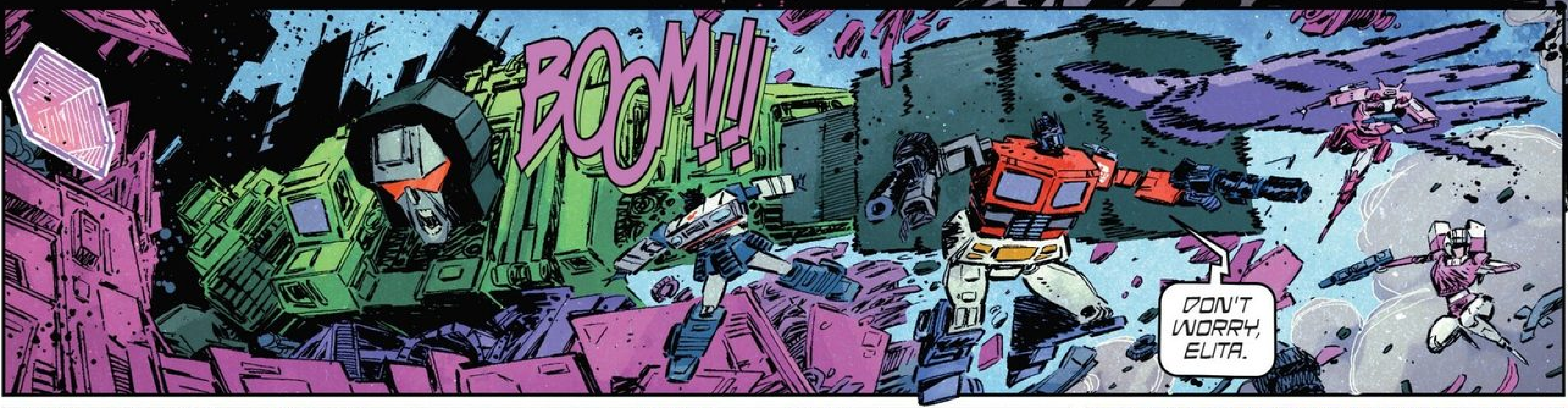

"I MUST ADMIT, AUTOBOTS..."
YOUR RESILIENCE IS MOST IMPRESSIVE.
YOU KEEP TRYING TO GET IN MY HEAD...
AND I'LL KEEP PLAYING MY TUNE--
PLEASE. DO NOT SMEAR YOUR BRAVERY WITH MUSICAL PLATITUDES.
SLAP
IF YOU REFUSE TO TALK, I HAVE OTHER WAYS. BETTER WAYS.
IF I WANT TO SEE WHAT YOU'VE EXPERIENCED IN THIS NEW WORLD...
LEAVE HIM BE!
GHAHH!
I CAN JUST TAKE IT FROM THE SOURCE!

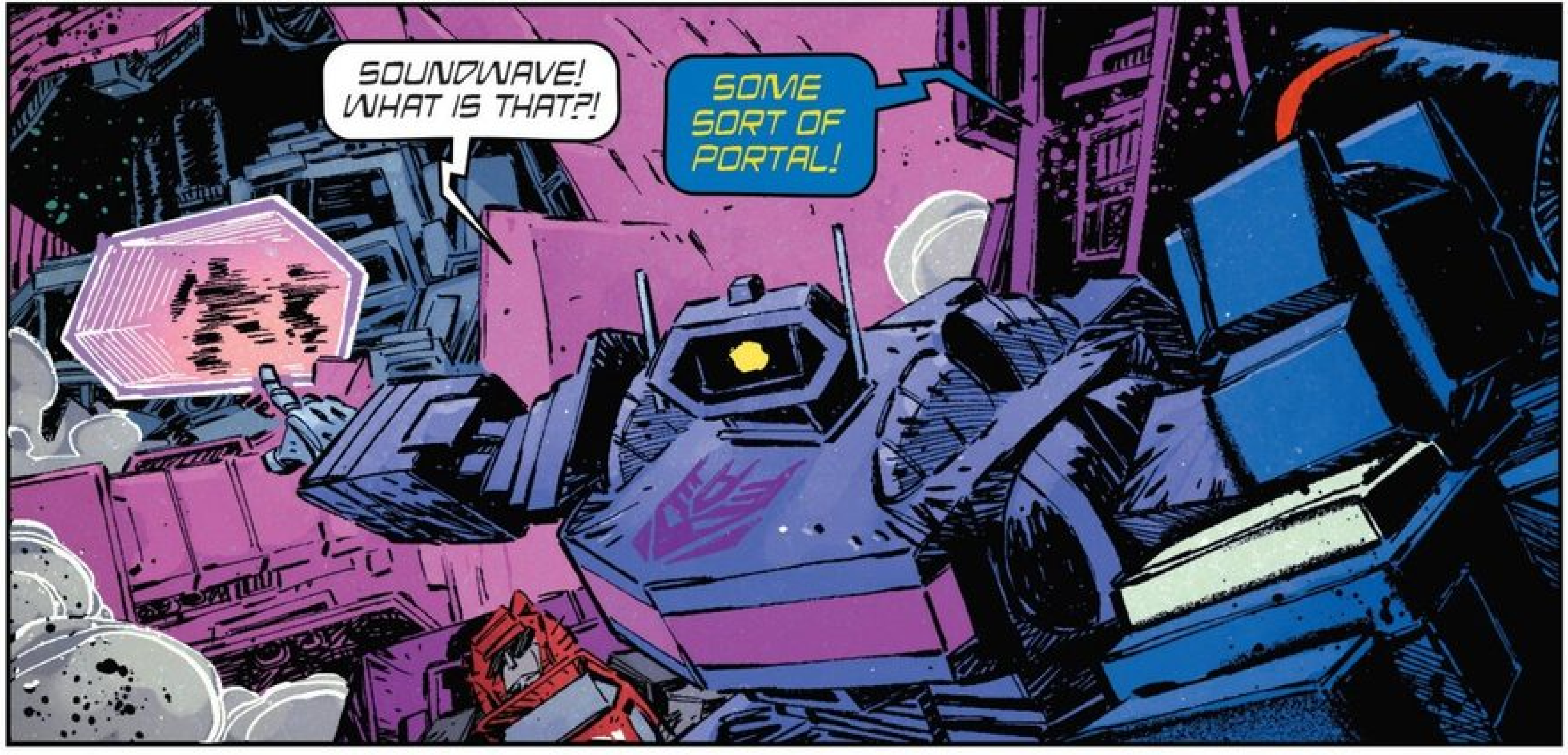

YOU SHALL DO NO SUCH THING, DECEPTICON.
TNK
WHA--?
DROP IT.
HOW ARE YOU DOING, MY OLD FRIENDS?
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT, OPTIMUS. BUT CLIFF IS HURT BAD.
AGH--
ELITA, ARE THE CHARGES SET?
JUST PLANTED THE LAST ONE. LET'S GET THE HECK OUT OF--
HOW DOES IT FEEL, DECEPTICON?

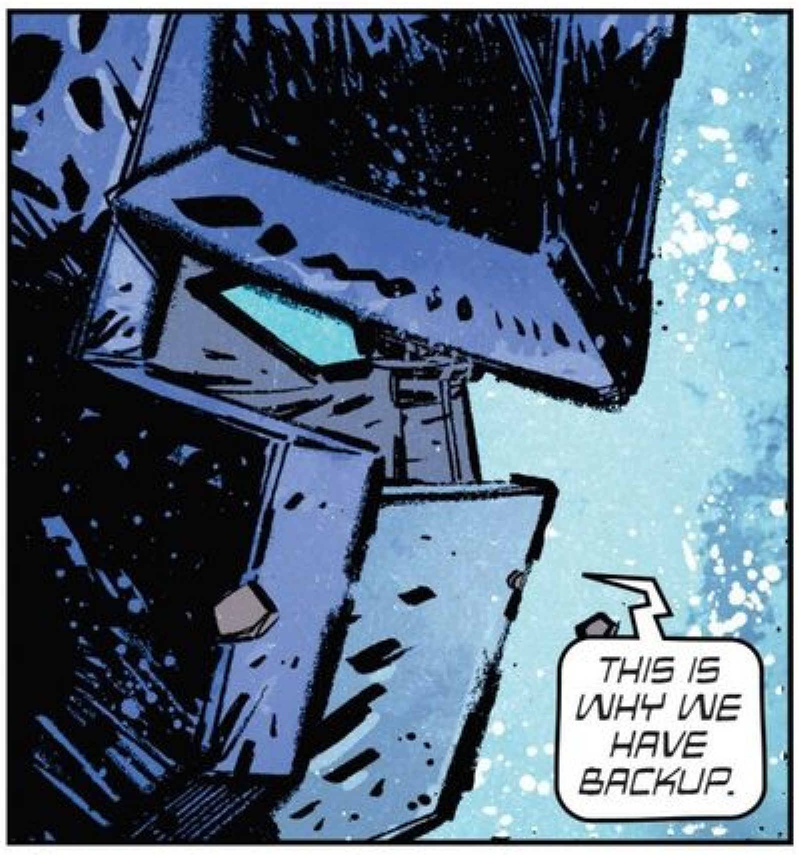

DOES IT FEEL GOOD TO BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF A LOADED BARREL? HOW ABOUT I END THIS RIGHT NOW?
ARCEE, STOP.
REMEMBER HOW FAR YOU'VE COME. DON'T LOSE YOURSELF TO THIS PATH AGA--
FOOLS!
GYAH!!
PEEW PEEW PEEW
NOT ANOTHER STEP!!!

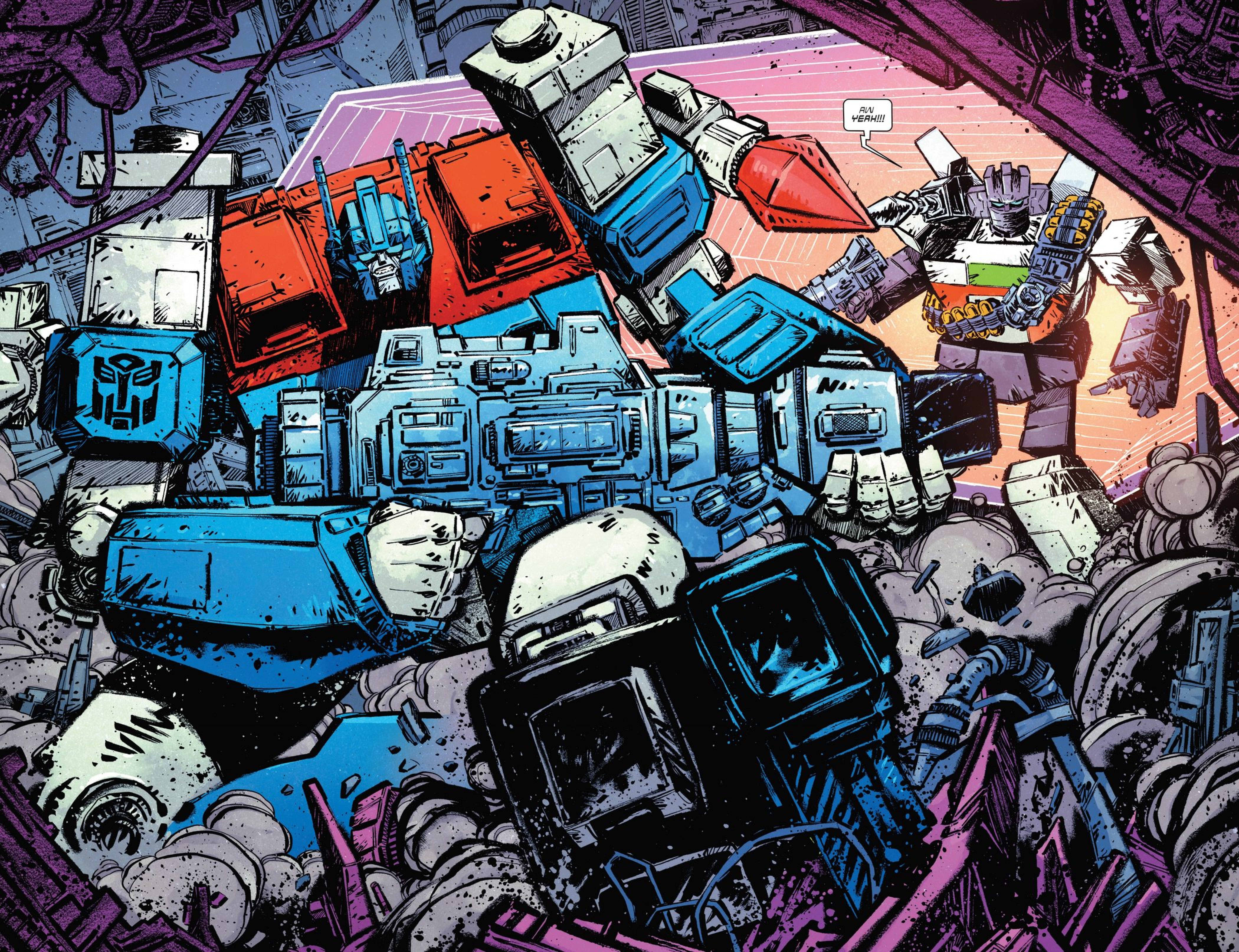

COWARD.
ZWAP
ZWAP
ZWAP
ZWAP
TO ME, MY DECEPTICONS!!!
WHAT THE--?
AUTOBOTS!
COMBINE YOURSELVES, PRESENTLY!!!
INTO DEVASTATOR!!!

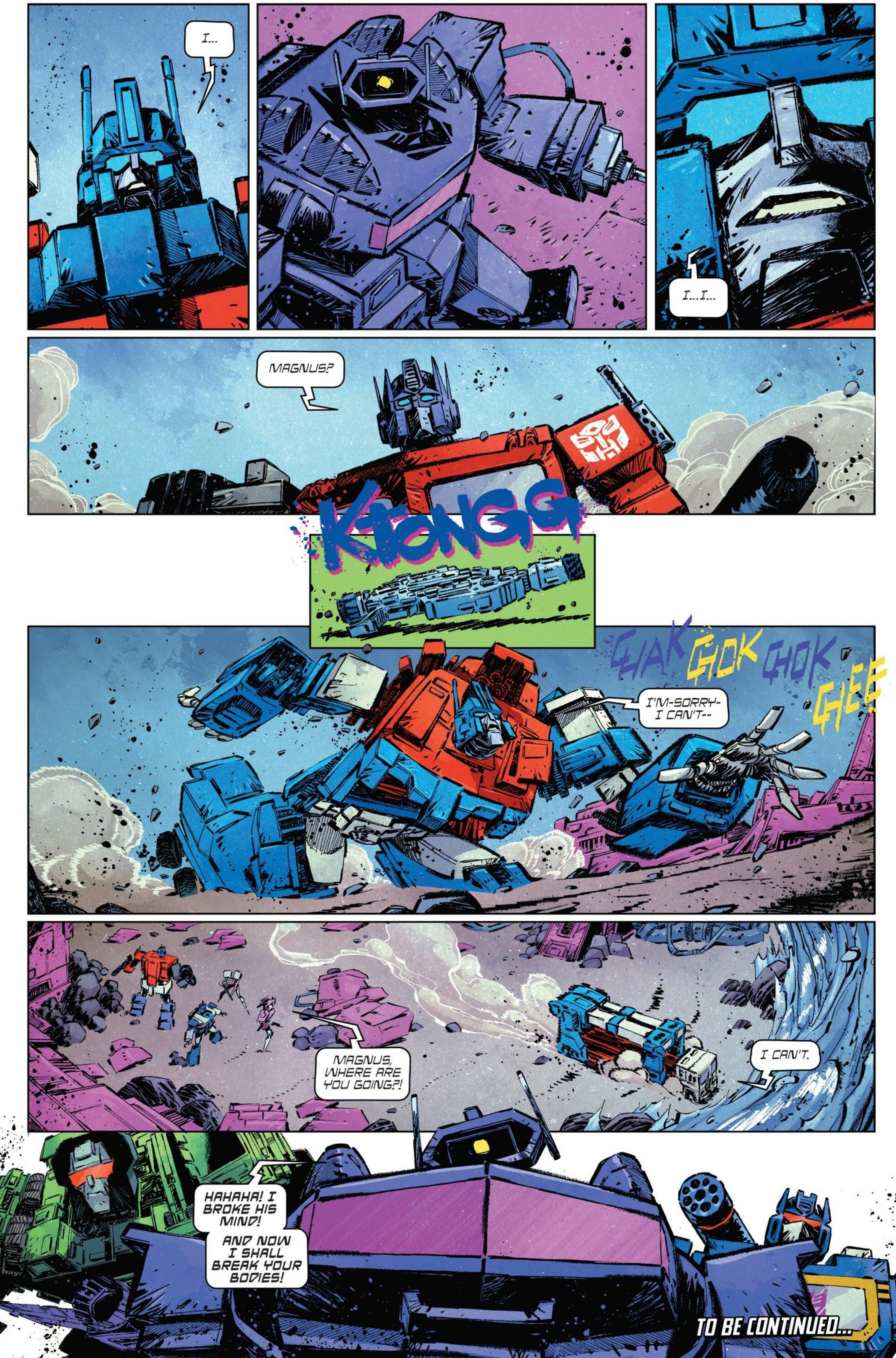

RAGGGHH!
SPARKDAMN IT ALL!


BOOM!!!
DON'T WORRY, ELITA.


SOUNDWAVE! WHAT IS THAT?!
SOME SORT OF PORTAL!


THIS IS WHY WE HAVE BACKUP.


AW YEAH!!!


I...
I...I...
MAGNUS?
KTONGG
CHAK CHOK CHOK CHEE!
I'M-SORRY- I CAN'T--
MAGNUS, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
I CAN'T.
HAHAHA! I BROKE HIS MIND!
AND NOW I SHALL BREAK YOUR BODIES!
TO BE CONTINUED...

THE MATRIX OF LETTERSHIP

SEND LETTERS TO
TRANSFORMERS@SKYBOUND.COM

Ultra Magnus--say it isn't so?! What a stunning finale to our penultimate issue of arc two…editor Ben Abernathy back again joined by the maestro himself, Daniel Warren Johnson!

"MAKE A BREAK FOR COVER, I'LL TRY TO UNLEASH THE POWER OF THE MATRIX! OPEN, DAMN IT OPEN!" I love you so much, Magnus. I really hope you don't die.

Let's get to these letters.

* * *

Skybound team!

Just gotta say in 35 years of reading comics, I have never wanted to write in as much I have with this series. Each issue has been jaw dropping. First, I gotta shout out my LCS--The Dragon's Lair, Fayetteville, NC--for hooking me up with all the covers each issue every month. Much love.

Thank you so much, man!!!

Second comes the questions:

1. Where on the Optimus did G1 season 1 and 2 hurt you? It's nice seeing season 3 toons get some much needed love but man, I'm gonna need therapy seeing my heroes die.

Ha! Good question! Mostly, I just love putting these characters through situations that will challenge our expectations of them. I also wanted to have very high stakes, with the feeling that anyone could go at any minute. Brutal, but really fun to write (and hopefully to read!)

2. Since I'm assuming Starscream is dead dead (it's comics, no one stays dead forever), can we expect a different target for the Megatron backhand? Or given the wrestling vibes he gonna do a Ric Flair chest chop?

Oh man…if Megatron chest chopped Optimus… that would be something…hmmm….

I'm here for this ride regardless! It's been a great ride so far and can't wait to see who dies next.

Jim Marvin
Fayetteville NC

* * *

Dear Skybound team,

I've always been a fan since I watched the G1 show on my grandma's VHS as well as catching Armada. 9 Issues in and this still manages to be a rollercoaster, start to finish. My favorite issue thus far has to be #6. When Optimus got his second wind and just BODIED Devastator! Even so, I'm still enjoying the story this far along with the characters. Genuinely great work everyone!

I also have a question:

While I appreciate the setting of "no one is safe", it does pain me to see Ratchet out of the scene. However, you've given me hope since Jetfire (kinda) and Beachcomber are back. Can you at least say if "death" in this series is truly permanent?

ANSWER: It kind of depends. I am of the opinion that once someone goes, they should go forever, but as this is a comic book, we have to flex that at least a little. If it makes you feel any better, I also love(d) Ratchet, and it pained me to write that. But what would Shockwave do? Exactly what he did. And what did Ratchet do? Save his buddy. And staying true to the characters is what I'M trying to do, and letting them lead the story. R.I.P. MY GUY!

Thank you all for the amazing writing, art, colors, and lettering. Your work continues to inspire me.

-Drew

Drew, thanks so much for saying that. If I've helped you even just a little bit on your artistic journey, that is incredible. Good luck to you on that continued journey!!

* * *

Dear Skybound Team,

My name is Rosy. I just finished reading Issue #9. I have never gotten into any previous Transformers comics before but seeing one of my favorite fictional robots having a new series from Image was very compelling and I decided to get into it. I was not prepared for what your team has cooked for this series! I love how you guys handled the characters and the pacing. Out of all of the Optimus(es?) I've watched, you have crafted a very grounded and unique one that makes me want more every millisecond. Keep up the phenomenal work! I would like to ask a question if I may, did the 1986 Transformers Movie have any influence when writing this series? I'm noticing...a lot of loss of sparks. Thank you so much!

'Till All Are One!
Rosy

Thank you for your wonderful letter, Rosy, and support the series…I think "phenomenal" is really the right word to describe the work Daniel, Jorge, Mike, and Rus are delivering each month.

And YES, Rosy, I used the 86 film as a

bit of a “style bible” as that is still my favorite part of TF fandom and history. It’s something that I treasure deeply still, even after writing this book for over a year now!

Hello, my name is Jolene, and I absolutely love this run of comics! This is so far my favorite piece of Transformers media ever, from the portrayal of the characters, the action, the incredible artwork, the storytelling. This is what I’ve always wanted from the franchise, especially when it comes to Optimus Prime, he is exactly what I wanted out of the character.

I have one question for something I've wanted to see forever: Will we see Scrapper and Onslaught interact? I’ve always imagined them butting heads since they’re both intelligent leaders of Combiner teams who have both fought in the past, but I don’t think this has ever been touched upon in official media. Now that Onslaught is on Earth, and so is Scrapper, I’m so excited to see this dynamic!

Thank you so very much for these amazing issues, I look forward to reading them every month and count the days until the next one! You all deserve the massive amount of support that the fandom has given you all!

Thank you, Jolene! I love your question. To be honest, one of my main struggles writing this book is how to handle the Combiners. There’s only so much “room” in a 20-22 page comic, so getting out their personalities to the reader is so hard. I’m still figuring it out as I go, and hopefully will do them justice moving forward.

Hello,

First off, even before opening the comic, the imagery of Optimus Prime holding the world on his shoulders like Atlas was incredible. It really showcases the internal struggle Optimus goes through every waking moment of his time on Earth.

What I love about his writing in this arc is that it understands one of the most fundamental parts of his character: be strong enough to be gentle. Although I'm not fighting an intergalactic war myself, I relate a lot to some of the Autobots’ struggles in trying to keep a brave face in the wake of terror beyond any of our dreams. It’s the human aspect of them ironically that keeps me hooked for every panel.

Also, one last question before I go.

I noticed that Carly was slowly hardening her heart throughout the series. Will there be a tipping point to where she’ll completely lose it? And if so, will the consequences shake up everything we know so far?

Can’t wait to see more,
Leo B.

I wish I could say more about Carly, Leo, but my lips must remain sealed! I will say that I think she’s a wonderful character and she surprises even me as I write her now. Thank you for your thoughts on my presentation of Optimus. He’s so wonderful to write. In some ways, he kind of restores my faith in humanity as I write out his dialogue. It’s weird. But I’ll take it!

Hey there,

Wanted to give a big shoutout to Rus Wooton’s lettering! Generic lettering can kill even a great comic, and skillful, slick lettering can make a good comic great. I really want to pay more attention to comic lettering as an important part of the artform, so thanks to Rus for giving great examples, and good on your team for not skimping on the lettering! If you ask me, Rus is a true bearer of the Matrix of Lettership.

Keep it up,
Jerry

I 100% agree, Jerry, and Rus had a special message in response:

“Matrix of Lettership? Does that mean I’m an Autobot now? Thanks!”

Amen, Jerry! I couldn’t have said it better myself. Rus has been with me through so many creator owned and licensed comics, and he’s elevated every single one. SO THANK YOU, RUS!!!!

And with that, we come to the end of this issue’s Matrix of Lettership. I am currently sitting in my favorite coffee shop/breakfast place/bakery in Chicago, LOAF LOUNGE. Have you heard of it? When you inevitably visit Chicago, you should come eat here, and know that I wrote about 75 percent of all the Transformers dialogue you read in this comic RIGHT HERE IN THIS VERY PLACE. Also, the Eisner award ceremony is in a few weeks, where my work on TF has been nominated for not one, BUT TWO Eisners!!! WHAT??? So please, as you’re now reading this, travel back in time to early July, wish me luck, then return to your present time to try and make the world a little bit better than the day before. I will try to do the same.

Much love, my friends.

-DWJ

See you next month, everyone! Please keep the letters coming!

-Ben

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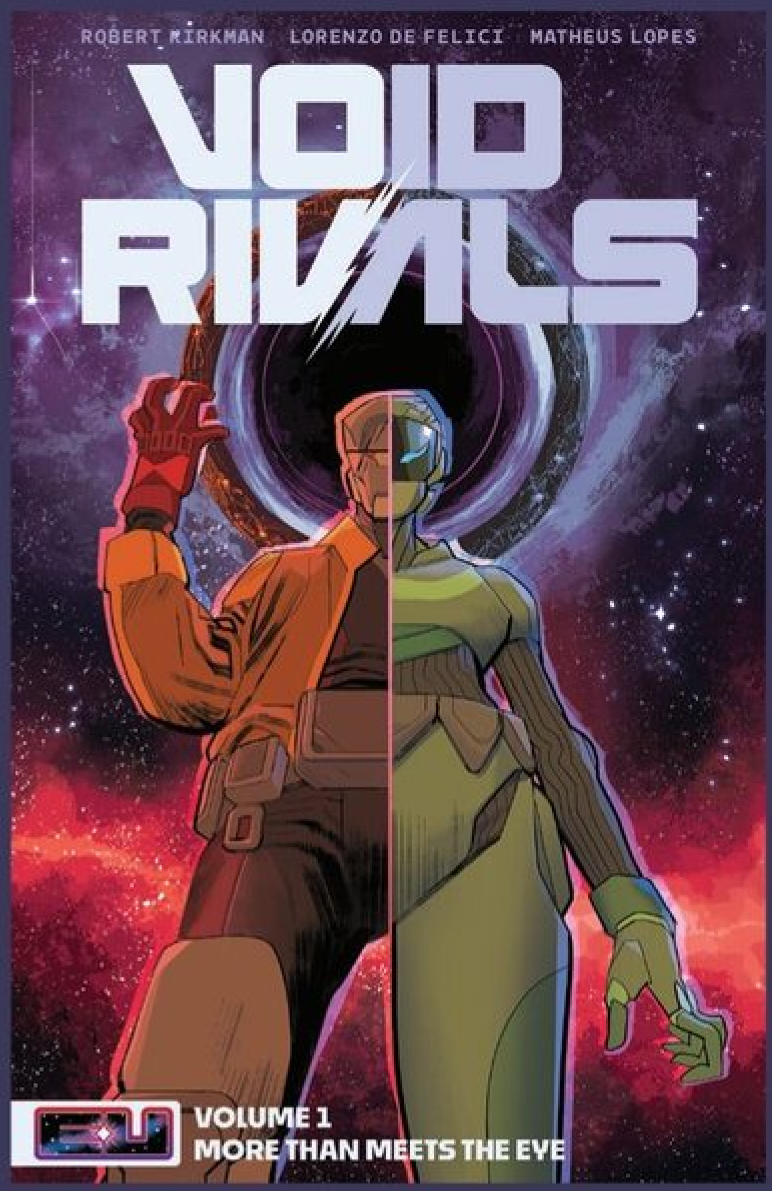
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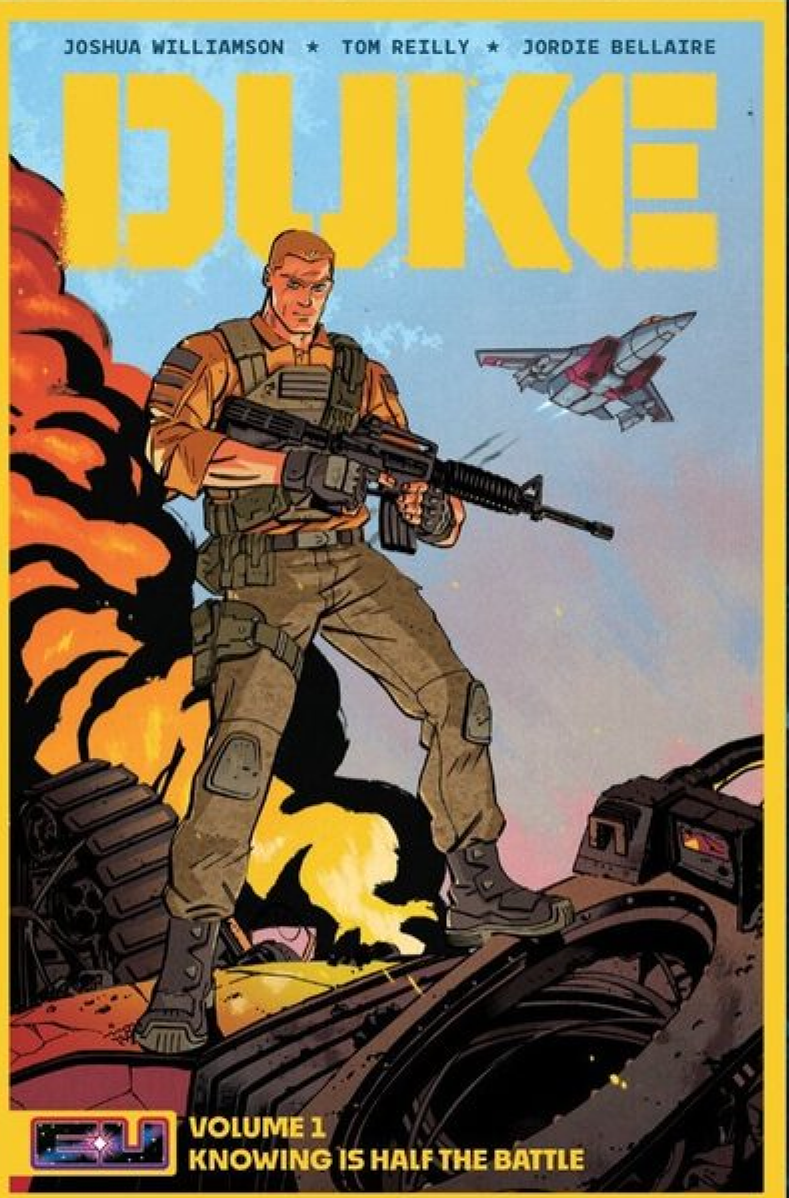
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